requirements of textile industry especially apparel in the field of design, merchandising and marketing;

(xv) Facilities by way of eco-testing laboratories have been created to enable exporters to get the garments/textiles pre-tested for conforming to the requirements of importing countries;

(xvi) 100% Foreign Direct Investment permitted through automatic route in the textile sector with certain exceptions; and

(xvii) Refund of taxes and duties on exports through drawback route.

Dismantled quota system for textiles

394. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) how Government propose to bring reforms in textile sector to grab the dismantled quota system which will become operational from 2005;

(b) what measures Government have taken or porpose to take to increase exports to the level of $ 25-30 billion from the present $ 12 billion by 2013;

(c) whether Government propose to dereserve knitted and hosiery sectors from the small scale sector as a part of this; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI SHANKERSINH VAGHELA): (a) and (b) To strengthen domestic textile industry for meeting the growing global competition, the following important announcements has been made in the Union Budget 2004-05:

- Except for mandatory excise duty on polyester filament yarn including texturised yarn, synthetic and artificial fibres and synthetic and artificial filament yarns, the whole value addition chain has been given excise exemption option.
- Additional Excise Duty on Textiles and Textile Articles (AT&T) and Additional Excise Duty (Goods of Special Importance) Act have been abolished.
- Basic customs duty on various textile machinery and spare parts has been reduced to 5%.

Besides, Government has been taking a number of steps from time to time to provide an enabling environment for the industry to meet the emerging global competition and thereby increase India's exports. Some of the important initiatives taken are:

(i) The Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme (TUFS) has been made operational from 1-4-1999 to facilitate the modernisation and upgradation of the sector.

(ii) Weaving, processing and garment machinery, which are covered under TUFS, have been extended the facility of accelerated depreciation at the rate of 50%. Cost of machinery has also been reduced through Fiscal Policy measures. This further encourages modernisation.

(iii) The Government has launched a centrally sponsored scheme titled "Apparel Park for Export Scheme" for imparting focused thrust for setting up of apparel manufacturing units of international standards at potential growth centres and to give fillip to exports.

(iv) For upgrading infrastructure facilities at important textile centres, a scheme "Textile Centre Infrastructure Development Scheme" (TCIDS) has been launched.

(c) and (d) In order to encourage investments in the knitted and hosiery sector, the Government increased SSI investment limit for these items from Rs. 1 crore to Rs. 5 crores. The Budget Speech (2004-2005) has mentioned that 85 items from various sector can be safely taken out of the reserved list. The items to be taken out of the reserved list are yet to be announce.

National Youth Festival

395. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government organizes a National Youth Festival every year,

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the criteria for young people who can participate in this National Youth Festival;

(d) whether State Governments are encouraged to hold State-level youth Festivals; and